THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Commerce and Industry Minister led an official-cum-business delegation to the United Kingdom in October, 2004 and Australia in May, 2005. During these visits Destination India Events were organized in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. These events aim at dissemination of information on the investment climate in India and help in building greater awareness on investment opportunities in India including in the infrastructure sector.

Bio-piracy of traditional Indian medicines

1754. DR. CHHATTRAPAL SINGH LODHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how many cases of bio-piracy like that of grant of patent by European Patent Office to the New York based MNC WR Grace on the use of "Neem as Fungicide" has been detected in last two decades; and

(b) what is the status of litigations on the grant of patents on wound-healing properties of 'Haldi' or anti-diabetic property of 'Karela', 'Jamun' and 'Brinjal' which are examples of blatant bio-piracy of Indian T-K that have generated considerable hue and cry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Applicability of the patent law being restricted to the territory of the patent granting country, patents granted by the European Patent Office have no applicability in India. Data on patents granted as well as revoked by various countries are not maintained. Patent being a private right is contested and defended by affected parties in accordance with the patent law of the country concerned. Patents granted on wound healing properties of turmeric in the United States of America and on the fungicidal property of neem in Europe were successfully contested by affected parties and got cancelled.

Growth rate of infrastructure

† 1755. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that out of six core sectors like crude petroleum, petroleum refinery products, electricity, cement and finished steel etc. progress was low in five sectors in April, 2005 as against April, 2004 due to which the growth rate of infrastructure was 7 per cent as against 10.5 per cent;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to maintain high growth rate?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) As per the latest information available, the overall growth of six infrastructure industries (comprising crude petroleum, petroleum refinery products, electricity, coal finished steel and cement accounting for a weight of 26.68% in the index of industrial production with base 1993-94) was 4.4 per cent in April, 2005 compared to 9.1% in April, 2004. The slowdown in the overall growth was due to negative growth in both crude and petroleum products, lower growth in electricity generation and in cement production in April, 2005 against April, 2004. Steps to improve domestic oil production are being taken. These include improving the recovery factor from existing major fields, increasing exploration efforts through New Exploration Licensing Policy, exploring new areas and developing newly discovered fields speedily. For power, the Electricity Act, 2003 contains enabling provisions for the development of a competitive and efficient power sector. Also Government is implementing the Accelerated Power Development and Reforms Programme (APDRP) aimed at implementing distribution reforms. For cement industry the Government has identified thrust areas for increasing demand for cement.

Diversification of trade between India and China

1756. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any medium term plans to diversify the trade basket between India and China;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government has studied the issue of diversifying the trade pattern between India and China;